RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

February ,1992

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

TRI-CITY SLUDGE GASIFIER DEFEATED

On January 21, 1992, the Hudson County Utilities Authority (HCUA) voted to abandon plans to complete construction of the proposed gasifier that was being built to make Union City, Weehawken and Hoboken comply with federal regulations concerning disposal of their sewage sludge. The HCUA commissioners instead decided to select a chemical stabilization process that is environmentally safer and cheaper.

For two years, environmental activist groups of Union City, Weehawken and Hoboken had been struggling long and hard against this project because of the "serious questions about the quality of the emissions and the wisdom of sludge incineration in such a densely populated and already environmentally burdened area". The poisonous toxins that would have been released by the burning of the sludge would have been hazardous to the health of the citizens of the local area. The most active groups in this oppostion were the Hoboken Environmental Commission, Union City Residents Association and the Weehawken Environmental Committee. Special mention should be made of the efforts of Ruth Elsasser of Weehawken and Graziella Heins of Union City, who convinced the local, county and state officials about the serious health problems of this project. Riverview Neighborhood Association has supported the efforts of these groups and participated in the fight against this project.

The Tri-City Sewage Commission has begun to receive bids for an environmentally-safer alternative process from several firms. This stabilization process will dry and chemically treat the sludge instead of incinerating it. This treated product will then be used as fill and fertilizer by farmers and contractors. The state Dept. of Environmental Protection and Energy (DEPE) has approved this action and has pledged to secure grant monies from the U.S. EPA for the alternative process.

Hazardous footnote: The same day that the gasifier was defeated there was a very dangerous fire in Jersey City at the City Chemical Co. on Hoboken Avenue. It has now been confirmed that there were dangerous chemicals, including cyanide, that were released into the air due to the fire. Officals of the Hudson Regional Health Commission are unsure whether this chemical emission was hazardous.

Winds blew the chemical smoke toward downtown Jersey City and the Newport project. Christ Hospital and local cliff-side residents could have been affected if the winds had blown in the other direction - directly into the Heights.

The Heights, along with the rest of this area bordered by the two tunnels, the Palisade cliffs and the Hudson River is an extremely environmentally burdened area. We as citizens and officials living here have a special responsibility to protect the health and safety of all the people. There must be protection against not only present dangers from an industrial past but, just as important, any potential future dangers. These future dangers can be anything from the defeated gasifier to the N.J. Transit's proposed interim bus lane to be built below the Palisades over the old Conrail line.

A PROPOSAL TO EXTEND RNA BOUNDARIES

A proposal to change the current boundaries of the Riverview Neighborhood Association was made at the January meeting. The current boundaries, in which a member must live in order to have voting privileges, are Cuneo Place to the south, Bowers Street to the north, Palisade Avenue to the west and Ogden Avenue to the east. The new boundaries that are being proposed would be Propspect Street to the south, Congress Street to the north and New York Avenue to the west.

Since this proposal will change our present constitution, it is necessary to comply with the constitutional provision

COMING EVENTS

1) **RNA MEETING:**
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, at 7:30 PM
AT THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

2) Christ Hospital proposal for additional parking:
Planning Board, February 18th, 5:00 pm, City Hall

3) Heights Community Relations Council: Guest Speaker
Carmen Messano, Hudson County Prosecutor
Monday, March 2, 7:30 pm , N. Dist. Police Station

4) Board of Adjustment hearing for 210 Ogden Avenue:
Thursday, March 5th : 6:00 pm at City Hall

defining amendments. "This constitution may be altered, amended,or repealed, by a two thirds majority vote of all of the members of the organization. After an amendment has been proposed, it shall be published in the next two consecutive issues of the RNA newsletter. It shall not be voted upon until the second meeting after it is first proposed."

Many of our non-voting members (who receive our newsletter) currently reside within the proposed boundaries. If adopted, this extention could conceiveably bring in a number of community active people who are currently without a formal neighborhood organization.

If you have an opinion and wish to discuss this proposal, please attend the February 14th meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

The holiday rush must have still been in effect, because the January meeting of the RNA was sparely attended. The meeting was conducted by Maria Tuzzo, RNA Secretary, because of the absence of both chairperson and vice-chairperson.

The business that was discussed at this meeting was: the extension of the RNA boundaries in order to accept new voting members, an update on the status of the renovations for Riverview Park, and invitations to Christ Hospital to attend our March meeting (to discuss their new parking lot proposal) and the NJ Transit Waterfront Transportation Project to attend our April meeting (to discuss their interim bus lane and their light rail proposals).

Because of the small number of members in attendance, it was necessary to postpone the opening of the nominations for the annual election of RNA officers. The nomination process will be formally opened at the Februaury meeting.

The 50/50 drawing was won by Dominick Rea who generously donated the winnings back to RNA. The meeting closed with our usual home-baked refreshments and relaxed conversation.

Please join us at our next meeting on February 14th, at 7:30 pm at the Harbor View.

Maria Tuzzo, Secretary

UPDATE: RIVERVIEW PARK RENOVATIONS

On January 8, 1992 the City Council passed two resolutions concerning the renovation plans for Riverview Park. The first resolution (McC-2611) awarded the construction contract to Tec-Con Contractors, Inc., for the "rehabilitation of Riverview Park - Project No. 89-023 for the Department of Administration, Division of Engineering/Bureau of Architecture". The second resolution (McC-2631) authorized the award of a construction contract "between the City of Jersey City and P.S.E.& E. for the installation, maintenance and all necessary trenching work for the dusk to dawn lighting at Riverview Park, for the Department of Administration, Division of Engineering/Bureau of Architecture".

RNA has always supported the idea of renovating the Park but has had serious reservations concerning certain aspects of the present proposal. The size and location of a new playground is unnecessary and will eliminate a well-used piece of open playing space at the Bowers Street side of the Park. Because of the present state of affairs, RNA fears that there will be inadequate maintenace and security from the Public Works Dept. and the Police Dept. to upkeep this proposed playground. It will not be secured or locked up in the evening and therefore could be used as a hang-out by our local criminal elements: exposing it to vandalism, graffitti, drinking and drug abuse. RNA's proposal to just upgrade the playgound in its present location on Ogden Avenue, has been consistently rejected.

There has also been much debate about the need for a new drainage system and concrete pavement. The proposal has attempted to address our concerns about unnecessary tree destruction by "altering the drainage plan to avoid any deliberate tree removal and the hiring of a licensed tree surgeon to designate any tree repairs caused by the construction". However, there is still the unexplained use of concrete paving instead of RNA's request for use of asphalt for the walkways. Other municipal parks and our county Park all have asphalt paving.

Ted Conrad has continued to present alternatives to the City Council to attempt to persuade them to make these changes to the renovation plan.

CONRAD'S CORNER

At a recent Council caucus meeting in City Hall, City archtitect Robert Cerchio (who does not reside in Jersey City) was allowed to speak about some new projects he wanted the Council to approve. Among them were plans to air condition City Hall for three million dollars, an outrageous amount for these dire times when taxes for Jersey City are the highest for any city in the United States. Since most people go down to the shore during the summer months and the council chambers are almost empty, imposing another three million in taxes on our already bankrupt City is an amount our taxpayers cannot afford. But gold-plating the basement while our City Hall roof is starting to leak in the Council chamber is the way we do things in Jersey City. There is no stitch in time to save nine - just wait until the roof caves in to do an expensive job.

When it comes to Riverview Park and just asphalting the existing sidewalks to save the tree roots under them, our out-of-town City architect has decided to dig them up and pour concrete which will kill off half the root structures of the trees. It will be much more expensive than just asphalting them as was done in Hamilton, Van Vorst, and Audubon Parks which was quite successful but will not be done according to the present plans for Riverview Park.

If the walkways of Riverview Park are done over with asphalt there would be enough money left over to renovate the whole Park including the pavilion which will remain a disgrace with the present plans. Sidney Greenfield, Rutgers botanist, agrees with our plan to save the trees. We don't need any unknown out-of-town architects to tell us what to do. We have three architects in our own neighborhood association who have years of landscape experience including such national projects as the Kennedy Grave and Pennsylvania Avenue which were done right here in Jersey City, right next to Riverview Park. Now that we have a depression with the highest taxes in the U.S., do we need out-of-town architects and contractors to do our work in the City?

COMMUNITY UPDATES

On Tuesday, February 18th, Christ Hospital will present another parking extension plan to the Planning Board. At a meeting on February 6th, the community met with hospital officials to discuss this proposal. The local residents overwhelmingly rejected these plans as an unnecessary intrusion into their community. The plan calls for paving over of a section of Ogden Avenue that extends south from Prospect Street and converting it into a surface parking lot for hospital employees. The plan also will need the City Council's permission to vacate the street. This is but the first stage of a more elaborate plan which includes a multi-level parking garage on this location within a few years. Understandably the local residents are outraged by this proposal that will ultimately cut off their skyline views and create pollution problems in their backyards. Any one interested, should go to the Planning board meeting on Feb. 18th.

There has been a frightening escalation of robberies throughout Jersey City. The Journal reported that there have been over 40 robberies in the Heights alone during the month of January, 1992. Undisclosed sources have stated that there have been over 400 robberies in the whole City! There are two things that people can do to prevent these crimes. First, please be careful, especially at night: don't carry a lot of money, or wear expensive jewelry or clothing and try not to travel alone. Second, tell our elected officals we need to depoliticize the whole police department, by rehiring the laid off police officers and resolving the contract negotiations. A good start in that direction would be to appoint a new police director who will turn the department around : give a new sense of morale and accomplishment to the rank and file men and women. To inspire confidence in the citizenry, there is a need to get the cop back on the beat and have walking patrols through our neighborhoods.

LETTERS

You gave a very interesting description and opinion [of the economic condition of Jersey City] in the December newsletter. I found it to be straight to the point with good intentions to hopefully make individuals not only within government but also the taxpayer and city resident realize that Jersey City is at an important crossroad - perhaps historical regarding it's future and ultimate survival. I would be interested in your opinion on the following:

a) Should the administrators of Jersey City consider the option of bankruptcy in order to start fresh and control several of the escalating cost expenditures, such as union contracts, social services and education?

b) Is there any historical basis for the withholding of taxes until services and accountability improves?

c) Is the possibility of geographic secession from Jersey City a possibility and how realistic would that be? Basically what I am asking is: should what was originally Hudson City revert back to it's original status as a separate city?

Cosmo Sasso

PERSONALS

RNA would like to welcome our newest member, **Micheal Lawrence LoSauro**. This boy was born to Merl and Sal LoSauro, of Ogden Avenue on January 27th. Congratulations to both parents and long life to Micheal.

Maggi and Joe Brandt send their thanks to RNA for its generous donation to their son Henri's bone marrow transplant fund. Henri is the grandchild of our vice-chair Marie Lannie. RNA wishes Henri and his parents all the luck in the world.

JERSEY CITY MUSEUM

There will be a fasinating exhibit entitled "Lembeck & Betz: The Beer that made Milwaukee Jealous" at the Museum from February 12 through May 2, 1992. The exhibition will recount the history of the famous Jersey City brewery. Featured are a variety of lables, bottles, glasses and advertising memorabilia, including decorative serving trays. The Museum is located in the Main Library Building at 472 Jersey Avenue in Jersey City. Hours are from 10:30 am to 5:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday. For more information, call 547-4514.

HELP SUPPORT RNA

Don't forget to pay your annual membership dues for 1992. It only costs $3.00 a year to enjoy the benefits of joining Riverview Neighborhood Association.

Official membership entitles people living within RNA's boundaries to voting privileges on all matters that are brought before the association at the monthly general meetings. For people living outside the area, membership dues entitle them to receive the RNA monthly newsletter and attend the monthly meetings as active non-voting participants.

Make your check payable to Riverview Neighborhood Association and mail it to 232 Ogden Avenue, J.C., N.J. 07307. Be sure to include your return address so that your membership card can be sent to you. Better yet, bring it in person to our next meeting, Friday, February 14th at the Harbor View Health Care Center.

FEBRUARY...

The trees are full of beauty and glory,
the sunshine is pretty as gold.
The clouds are ugly and stormy for the season is cold.
In February we have to look forward to St. Valentine's Day, The Presidents' Birthdays: Abe Lincoln and George Washington,
And for RNA to start thinking about their big flea market and new officers for the year.
HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY TO ALL!

Madeline D. Rea

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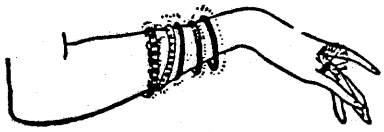

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COME TO OUR NEXT MEETING ON
FEBRUARY 14TH, AT 7:30 PM

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VOTE FOR RNA OFFICERS

The Annual Election of RNA officers will be held in March this year.

Nominations are for the offices of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Sargent-at-Arms. They will be accepted during the regular meeting on Friday, February 14th. Nominations will remain open and the elections will be held at the following meeting on Friday, March 13th.

Please make every effort to attend these two meetings and participate in our electoral process. Any official member who lives within in the boundaries of the organization can run for office or nominate another person.

Your chance to make a difference in your neighborhood and ultimately your city starts here at the RNA.

Please note - Only those members who have paid their annual dues ($3.00) for 1992 may hold office or vote in the March election.